

## ABSTRACT

The present invention comprises a series of network connection elements including automatic plug-ins, configurable plug-ins and visual based system-built customized extensions. These elements are used  
5 according to embodiments of the present invention to serve as building blocks for connecting one or more disparate systems together. In some embodiments of the present invention, these building blocks can be arranged in a visual based environment to help facilitate integration of the systems in question. In a preferred implementation, an API server provides a four-pronged solution  
10 to provide integrated data access. The four components of this implementation are an Internal Integration Engine, ETL and B2B application adapters, an XML Gateway, and an application-specific High Performance Interface.